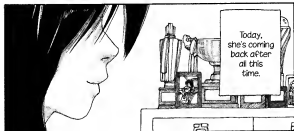


CHAPTER 4  
MERU X SHIMA

She and I  
were known as  
the golden  
pair.



In the  
Yukikaze middle  
school Tandem-  
Cross club,





HAA.... I'M SO HUNGRY. MOM, IS THERE ANYTHING TO EAT?

WELCOME BACK!



I'M HOME!



OF COURSE I'VE DONE MY BEST TO PREPARE A GREAT DINNER FOR YOU.

OH MY, IT'S MY DAUGHTER'S FIRST HOME-COMING IN TWO YEARS.



BUT YOU SEE... THERE'S SOMEONE WHO'S BEEN WANTING TO SEE YOU EVEN MORE THAN YOUR FATHER AND I...



SHIMA-CHI!!

HEHEHE!  
I COULDN'T WAIT  
THAT LONG, SO I  
CAME OVER  
INSTEAD.

I PLANNED  
TO GO SEE YOU  
FIRST THING IN  
THE MORNING!

MERU!!



COME ON!  
IT'S NOT LIKE  
YOU TO TURN  
THAT OFFER  
DOWN!

PLEASE  
DO HANG  
AROUND!

HEY! YOU'RE  
DEFINITELY STAYING  
OVER TONIGHT!  
JUST LIKE OLD  
TIMES.

I JUST  
WANTED TO  
SEE YOUR  
FACE FOR  
TODAY.

AH, I  
DON'T  
KNOW  
ABOUT  
THAT...



DON'T  
EVEN TRY  
THAT! YOU  
PLANNED TO  
FROM THE  
START!

OF  
COURSE,  
I ENDED UP  
STAYING  
OVER.



SO  
HOW'S SCHOOL?  
TENDEMINE PILOT  
TRAINING ACADEMY IS  
LEGENDARY FOR  
BEING TOUGH...



YEAH,  
WE WERE  
ALWAYS TO-  
GETHER  
THEN.

WE'D  
DO THIS ALL  
THE TIME BACK  
IN MIDDLE  
SCHOOL.

HEHE  
...



BUT, YOU  
KNOW, I'M NOW  
THE CAPTAIN OF THE  
PRESTIGIOUS ANDORO  
HIGH SCHOOL'S  
TANDEMINE  
CLUB...



YOU'RE  
NO DOUBT  
THE TOP OF  
THE CLASS,  
EVEN AT THE  
ACADEMY.

BUT THEN, WITH  
THE FORMER ACE  
OF THE YUKIKAZE  
MIDDLE SCHOOL  
TANDEM-CROSS  
CLUB,





MY GRADES  
AREN'T VERY GOOD,  
SO I'M ALWAYS STUCK  
TAKING EXTRA LESSONS.  
I HARDLY EVER GET  
A BREAK.

AHH...

I'M MORE  
UPSET THAT  
YOU HARDLY EVER  
COME BACK  
HERE.



MY STUDIES ARE  
ONE THING, BUT MY  
TANDEMINE PRACTICALS  
ARE BORDERLINE  
FAILING EVERY  
TIME.



NO WAY!  
THE PRODIGY PILOT  
SHIN-CHI COULD NEVER  
HAVE BAD GRADES.

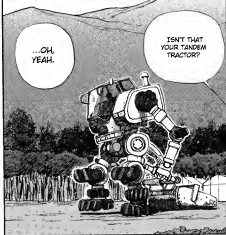
YOUR  
GRADE'S  
ARE  
BAD!!

NO...  
REALLY?



PROBABLY  
THAT'S YOUR  
PARTNER'S  
FAULT.





...OH,  
YEAH.

ISN'T THAT  
YOUR TANDEM  
TRACTOR?



...AH.



WE GOT  
THE KID TO  
SAFETY...

WELL  
YEAH,

BUT  
THEN WE WERE  
HAILED IN BY THE  
POLICE BECAUSE  
WE DIDN'T HAVE  
OUR LICENSES.



DO YOU  
REMEMBER THAT TIME  
WE TOOK IT WITHOUT  
PERMISSION TO SAVE  
THAT KID DROWNING  
IN THE RIVER?



I  
WONDER IF  
SADO-SENSEI  
IS DOING AL-  
RIGHT...



IN THE  
END, WE  
EVEN GOT  
A COMMEN-  
DATION.

BUT THE  
TANDEM-CROSS  
ADVISOR, SADO-SENSEI,  
COVERED FOR US AND WE  
DIDN'T REALLY GET  
IN TROUBLE.



HEHE...  
SENSEI SOUNDS  
THE SAME AS  
ALWAYS.

BUT MAN,  
IT SURE IS  
GOOD TO HAVE  
YOU TWO BACK!  
GOOD TO SEE  
YOU!

YEAH,  
REAL-  
LY



I'M  
NOT SO  
OLD YET TO  
HAVE PEOPLE  
WORRYING  
ABOUT  
ME!

COME  
ON NOW!



OKAAAY!

SINCE YOU'RE  
HERE, WHY DON'T  
YOU MEET WITH  
YOUR JUNIORS  
FOR A WHILE?

(NOTE:  
Junior =  
Kouhai)

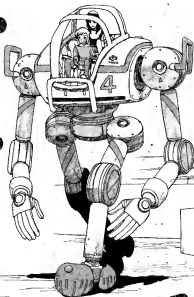




**THUD**

**THUD**

**THUD**

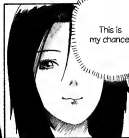


**THUD**

AH, IT'S SO  
NOSTALGIC! IT  
SMELLS LIKE OUR  
YOUTH!

SO  
WHAT DO YOU  
THINK? BEING BACK  
IN THE TANDEMINE  
COMPETITION AFTER  
ALL THIS TIME!

**THUD**



..huh?



She's not  
increasing the  
output!?



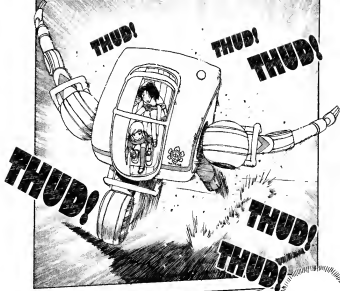
Shima-chi  
isn't the kind  
of person to  
hesitate with  
the throttle,  
is she?!

No  
way!



Oh well,  
looks like I  
need to drop  
my skill down  
to middle  
school  
level.

!!?



Shima-chi is  
just messing  
with the center  
of gravity  
a lot...



But  
how!? She's  
holding back  
the output...

Well, you can certainly increase speed by limiting braking, even in humans...

But such amazing skill is ridiculous! Unbelievable!

No way... Did she take the center of gravity off auto-balance? She's manually controlling the brake and compensating for the machine's movements with such accuracy...



ALRIGHT, LET'S TRY OUT A HIGH JUMP SOON!

HIGH JUMP!  
SOON!

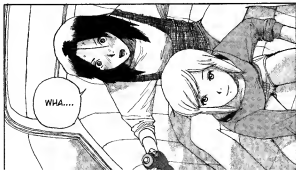
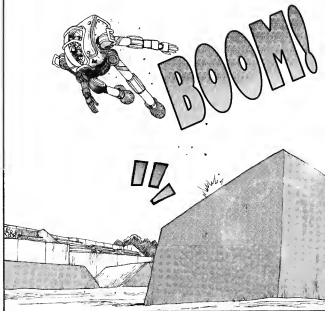
THIS IS PRETTY NICE! GOING AT A RELAXED PACE FOR ONCE!

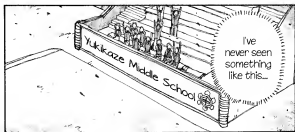
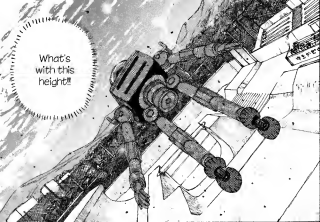
If you tried this kind of superhuman feat at full speed, the machine would tear itself apart.

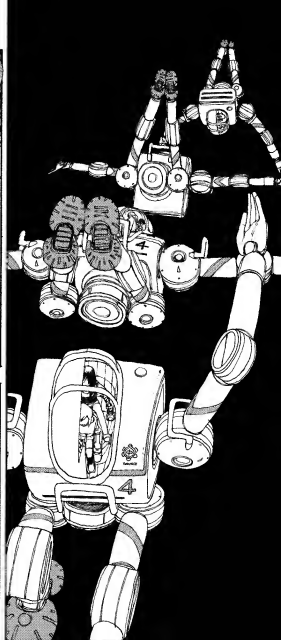
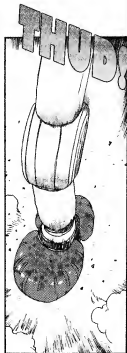


Which is why she has been holding back the throttle.



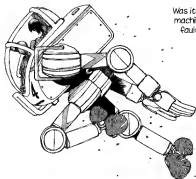








Because  
it lacked the  
acceleration and  
spin to pull  
it off?



Was it the  
machine's  
fault?

That's  
probably  
not it...



It has a  
graceful sense  
of caution,  
in addition  
to her old  
boldness.



Shima-chi's  
steering...

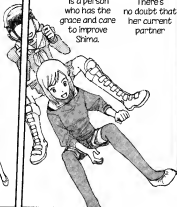
With  
that person,

Shima-chi  
can fly so much  
higher.



is a person  
who has the  
grace and care  
to improve  
Shima.

There's  
no doubt that  
her current  
partner



But  
with that  
person...

Not  
with me...



...YEAH?



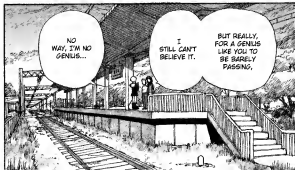
AH-AHAHA!!

THIS IS FUN!!



...PROBABLY NOT.

YOU WON'T BE BACK FOR A WHILE AGAIN, WILL YOU?



NO WAY, I'M NO GENIUS...

I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE IT.

BUT REALLY, FOR A GENIUS LIKE YOU TO BE BARELY PASSING,





CHAPTER 4  
MERU X SHIMA



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